

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, MPOL, CA
SUBJECT: CANADIAN ARMED FORCES CHIEF APPEALS TO SOLDIERS' PATRIOTISM
IN QUEBEC

REF: 1975 QUEBEC A-50

1. CANADIAN ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL J.A. DEXTRAZE,
APPEALED TO PATRIOTISM OF CANADIAN MILITARY DURING VISIT TO FRENCH-
LANGUAGE UNITS AT VALCARTIER BASE IN SUBURBAN QUEBEC CITY
(SEE REFAIR). AS REPORTED IN WEDNESDAY 'LE SOLEIL,' DEXTRAZE SPOKE
LAST SATURDAY TO SOLDIERS WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS "CITIZENS IN UNIFORM."
A QUEBECOIS HIMSELF, DEXTRAZE SAID: "WE ARE PASSING THROUGH A
DIFFICULT PERIOD AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE REMAIN, WE OF
CANADIAN FORCES, AS UNIFIED AS WE HAVE ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED OUR-
SELVES TO BE ON THE BATTLEFIELD AS WELL AS IN MILITARY EXERCISES
IN OUR OWN COUNTRY. THIS QUESTION (SEPARATION OF QUEBEC) IS
MOST IMPORTANT NOW, AND IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR US TO REMAIN
UNIFIED TO SERVE OUR COUNTRY IN TIME OF PEACE."

2. LE SOLEIL WRITER OBSERVED THAT GENERAL DEXTRAZE SEEMED VERY
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CONSCIOUS OF DILEMNA THAT PQ ELECTION COULD POSE FOR FRENCH-
CANADIAN SOLDIERS. GENERAL DEXTRAZE IS QUOTED AS BEING WELL
AWARE THAT DURING NOVEMBER 15 ELECTION ON-BASE VOTE AT VALCARTIER
GAVE MAJORITY TO PQ CANDIDATE LOUIS O'NEILL, WHO IS NOW MINISTER
OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS.

3. IN A SUBSEQUENT INTERVIEW WITH LE SOLEIL, DEXTRAZE REPEATED HIS

THOUGHTS ADDING THAT CANADA IS A FAMILY IN WHICH ALL MEMBERS ARE NOT IN AGREEMENT BUT MUST PULL TOGETHER TO PROTECT FAMILY'S INTEREST. DEXTRAZE THEN SAID THAT IN HIS REMAINING 6 MONTHS AS FORCE COMMANDER HIS MAIN PROJECT WAS TO EQUIP NAVAL FORCES WITH MORE SHIPS AND SEVERAL THOUSAND MORE MEN.

4. LE SOLEIL FOLLOWED DEXTRAZE STORY WITH SHORT ARTICLE STATING THAT MOST MILITARY PERSONNEL AT VALCARTIER ARE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO CANADIAN ARMED FORCES IF QUEBEC SEPARATES FROM CANADA. THEY WONDER IF THEY CAN MOVE TO ENGLISH CANADA WITH OBVIOUS FRENCH NAMES. PAPER QUOTES JUNIOR OFFICERS AS BEING CONCERNED WITH ATTITUDE OF GOQ TOWARD NATO AS PQ AND GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT YET HAD TIME TO CONSIDER STRATEGIC PROBLEMS. ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH QUOTE FROM TASCHEREAU (QUEBEC CITY) PQ DEPUTY RICHARD GUAY WHO RECENTLY SAID, "PARTICIPATION OF QUEBEC IN NATO IS SUBJECT OF SERIOUS STUDIES IN GOQ BECAUSE OF STRATEGIC POSITION OF QUEBEC ON NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT." ACCORDING TO GUAY, AS QUOTED IN LE SOLEIL, COMPLETE SECESSION OF QUEBEC COULD BRING REPRISALS--ABOVE ALL FROM AMERICAN SIDE. THEREFORE, WE WILL NOT ENDANGER BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST.

5. COMMENT: THIS EXTRAORDINARY PUBLIC POLITICAL COMMENT BY CANADA'S MOST SENIOR MILITARY PROFESSIONAL IS AN INDICATION OF THE DEEP CONCERN MANY SOLDIERS AT VALCARTIER FEEL FOR THE FUTURE SHOULD QUEBEC SEPARATE. THIS WORRY IS PARTICULARLY INTENSE AMONG FRENCH-CANADIAN SOLDIERS COMING FROM OTHER PROVINCES. THEY ARE NO DOUBT MIRRORING THE REACTIONS OF THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AT HOME. QUOTE FROM RICHARD GUAY IN LE SOLEIL FURTHER CONFIRMS, AS WE HAVE REPORTED BEFORE, THAT GOQ IS STUDYING STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SEPARATION AND HOPES TO CHANGE PARTY'S PLATFORM AT CONGRESS DUE TO BE HELD IN MAY.

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